

Books: Authors: Publishers: News: Reviews: Comment

White, Chambers, Lincoln— Other Writers of Fiction

By Willis Fletcher Johnson

A War Extravaganza

Mr. Chambers as a Rollicking
Humorist

THE LAUGHING GEN. By Robert W. Chambers. Illustrated by Henry Hunt. 12mo, pp. 281. D. Appleton & Co.

We have had Mr. Chambers as a writer of historical romances, of sentimental novels, of "society" novels, of problem novels, of war romances, and of what not else. Here we have him primarily as a humorist, and—like

him immensely. It is not, indeed, his first essay in humor. We remember with keen delight several former extravaganzas and satires from his pen. But this time he does the thing on a larger and more elaborate scale than ever before and with greater success.

An Irish-Canadian-American falling heir to a Swiss estate is made an innkeeper in spite of himself, and has for servants and guests a mixed kettle of spies, conspirators, two Kings and a Queen in exile, and a few miscellaneous Boches and Bolsheviks. The incidents and complications are extravagantly burlesqued, yet there is an air of seriousness about it that is all the more comical, while some of his characterizations and performances are mirth-provoking beyond all description. Neither Mark Twain in "Innocents Abroad," nor De Mille in "The Dodge Club," ever conceived more wildly ludicrous scenes and situations than some of these. Yet there is nothing incongruous in the touch almost of solemnity in the dedicatory foreword, "Take our offered heart-quick mirth. Let our laughter fight Thy fight!"

It is not laughter in the trenches after all that saves men from going mad? The war-weary world owes Mr. Chambers gratitude for this tour de force of sweet relief from horrors.

PUTNAM PUBLICATIONS

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Author of "Alsace and Lorraine,"
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An amazingly clever and pointed study, historical and biographical, of the lives of Cardinal Manning, Florence Nightingale, General Gordon and Dr. Arnold.

"A brilliant and extraordinarily witty book. Mr. Strachey's method of presenting his characters is both masterly and subtle. His purpose is to penetrate into the most hidden depths of his sitters' characters. There is something almost uncanny in the author's detachment."—The London Times.

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Author of
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An American Epic

Involving All the Comedy and
Tragedy of Life

IN THE HEART OF A POOL. By William Allen White. 12mo, pp. 615. The Macmillan Company.

"E Pluribus Unum" is the good American motto, applicable, we should say, to book-writing as well as to nation-building. Therefore we shall

take no exception to the vast complexity of Mr. White's work, nor suggest that the unity of its design is impaired or even jeopardized by the number and variety of its elements. Some works are of twofold, even threefold interest; while this is at least distinctly sevenfold. It is a study of the founding and development of a Western town. It is a volume of character sketches. It is a revelation or exploitation of parochial "society." It is a consideration of a sex problem. It is a socio-political industrial propaganda. It is an intensely dramatic story. In any one of these ways it might be characterized. But it is, in fact, an harmonious weaving together of them all, so deftly and so discreetly that no one over-dominates the others, nor clashes with any other, nor yet makes itself seem to be the raison d'être of the whole, with the rest as mere accessories.

To say this about the book is to suggest its greatness; which is precisely what we wish to do. It is a great work. In its scope it is one of

work, and few writers about that fascinating quarter of the world have done as good work as this.

to prosperity through the simple magic of pluck, perseverance, honesty and business tactics that are at once shrewd and equitable. There is much homely and racy humor in the book, and the train of incidents in the narrative is connected, logical and entertaining.

Sage or Simpleton?

A Lovable Philosopher 'Way
Down on Cape Cod

"SHAVINGS" By Joseph C. Lincoln. Illustrated. 12mo, pp. 285. D. Appleton & Co.

There may be as many different ways of writing what we may call dialect folk-stories as Kipling says there are of writing tribal lays, and it may be that every one of them is right; but as for us, give us Mr. Lincoln's way, especially as he has made it so delightfully manifest in this latest Cape Cod yarn. For his way is in fact a combination of several of the very best. There is, for example, the dialect; for which alone some seem to write. He has it as perfect as it could be recorded by a dictaphone. The humor? He simply exudes it from every pore. The "local color"? Every line is tinged with it, warranted to wash. In fact, he has practically every important element of the dialect folk-story in abundance and in rich perfection, and then in addition he has the one supreme thing which must be dominant in all really successful stories of what-ever kind, to wit, humanity.

These Cape Cod characters of his, quaint, whimsical, peevish, kooky and what not else, are all intensely human. They have the universal passions of the race; modified, of course, by environment, but still ringing true and unmistakable. The simple, shrewd philosopher who names and dominates the whole varied drama, epitomizes within himself the wisdom, the sympathy and the human kindness of the world. Selton have we encountered a more engaging figure. And if we say that this

work marks a distinct advance beyond any of Mr. Lincoln's former achievements, even beyond his glorious "Obadiah," that is because with the same fine art that he employed in those earlier works he has extended the human scope of his attention, and has made his book not merely an irresistible comedy, but in truth a comprehensive "comédie humaine."

The Tricks of Crooks

THIEVES' VITE. By Hubert Postgate. 12mo, pp. 245. The George H. Doran Company.

The sub-title describes this as an everyday detective story. We do not suppose that means that such things as those related are happening every day, but rather that the people are natural, everyday people, acting in an everyday manner, in which implication it is quite correct. For all that, the salient features of the story, while entirely possible and plausible, are decidedly unusual, surprising and engaging, giving the whole an air of originality which can seldom be attained in detective and mystery fiction.

More Fighter Than Bugler

THE FIGHTING MANOET. By Tommy Kehoe. Illustrated by Clyde Fawcett. 12mo, pp. 245. D. Appleton & Co.

We have met with few so spirited narratives of personal adventure as this war as this by a boy soldier of sixteen, who entered the service as a bugler but was set to fighting because his blowing of the bugle was so intolerably bad. He got E. L. Bacon to put his story in literary form for him, but otherwise it is all his own and is all true; and a marvellous tale it is of Berserk strife, of human kindness and of the victims of Hun and of holy hatred for the Hun themselves. Young and old alike will find it of absorbing interest.

ANNOUNCING A NEW NOVEL
by the author of
"THE WOOD CARVER OF LYMPUS"

OUT OF THE SILENCES

BY
Mary E. Waller

Miss Waller's new story is a virile romance of the times with its principal scenes laid in Canada just over the border from Dakota.

The hero is Bob Collamore, an American boy, and the character drawing in this new novel is as illuminating as any that this popular author has ever accomplished.

The plot is original, and is worked out with the same skill that gave "The Wood Carver of Lympus," "Flamsted Quarries" and "A Cry in the Wilderness" such a strong and popular appeal. \$1.50 net

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Yvette Gilbert on Singing Personalalia and Juvenilia

An Artist on Art

Yvette Gilbert on Lyrical and
Dramatic Interpretation

HOW TO SING A SONG. The Art of Dramatic and Lyrical Interpretation. By Yvette Gilbert. With an introduction by Clayton Hamilton. 12mo. The Macmillan Company.

Mme. Yvette Gilbert is a great artist. She is more—she is one of the greatest artists of the century. More-over, she is, unlike some well-known examples of purely instinctive art, a woman of intellect, and in her book, which she has made up partly from lectures which she has delivered, she proves this beyond a doubt. It is not that the book is perfect. There are some passages of ecstatic writing which show that Mme. Gilbert shares with the rest of femininity the gift of writing highly charged nonsense. Mme. Gilbert, too, is a Frenchwoman of Frenchwomen, and therefore such statements as "the Latin race possesses a greater sense of humor than the Anglo-Saxon" are understandable. Of course, she mixes up esprit with humor, but why not? France could not be France without its limitations.

When Mme. Gilbert gets down to business, her business, she is both delightful and delightfully instructive. No irreverent artist can ever explain the inner secret of her creations. Genius is impossible of explanation. But such an artist can impart technique, and Mme. Gilbert does this admirably. Her chapters on "Voice and Amphique," "How to Penetrate and Amplify Text," on "Different Forms of Tragedy," and on "The Comic Spirit," with examples from her songs and her method of singing them, are invaluable guides either to the student or the mature artist. They show before all else the necessity of intelligence and hard work, and even so, however fine her sensibility, can spring full armed from the head of Jove. In fact, as a handbook of what can be done in song interpretation Mme. Gilbert's book will be like Judic, whose voice is pretty, charming, and nothing else. We have had Judic before Judic, and we shall have Judic after Judic. You yourself have created our style; preserve it!

Which was good advice for Mademoiselle Yvette. Alas, the great run of humanity are not Mademoiselle Yvettes, and even so, however fine her sensibility, can spring full armed from the head of Jove. In fact, as a handbook of what can be done in song interpretation Mme. Gilbert's book will be like Judic, whose voice is pretty, charming, and nothing else. We have had Judic before Judic, and we shall have Judic after Judic. You yourself have created our style; preserve it!

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